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ABSTRACT

Thirty-two Canada Natives who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School agreed to share their stories in the form of this book. In this way, their families and communities could learn and understand what happened at the school, and all Canadians could know the truth about residential schools so that history is never repeated. Kamloops Indian Residential School was operated from 1893 to 1977 as part of the Canadian Government's residential school system. Residential schools were generally operated in partnership with religious organizations that played an integral role in the government's policy of assimilation. Children as young as 6 or 7 were rounded up and taken away, often in cattle trucks, to residential schools where they were isolated from their families and forbidden to speak their language or practice any part of their culture. Students experienced every form of abuse--physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual. The residential school experience has had a profound impact on First Nations people, their communities, and their descendants. Organized into four categories--coping, resistance, survival, and healing--the stories are told in the storyteller's own words. Many of them tell of oppression, abuse, and cruelty, but the stories are told without malice. All storytellers shared their stories, not to find blame, but as part of their healing journey and to ensure a better future for their children and grandchildren. An appendix presents acknowledgments and essays on storytelling, the relationship of language to culture, and trauma. (Contains photographs.) (TD)

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